



Rory Fratkin, baritone
*A senior recital in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for a Bachelor of Arts in Music*

Paul Woodring, piano

February 20, 2010

Saturday, 3:00 p.m.

Davidson Music Center

Room 218

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO

Sponsored by the Cal Poly Music Department & College of Liberal Arts



Program
Rory Fratkin, baritone
Paul Woodring, piano

- Berenice* George Frideric Handel
Si, tra i ceppi (1685-1759)
- Griselda*..... Giovanni Bononcini
Per la gloria d'adorarvi (1670-1747)
- 36 Arie di Stile Antico* Stefano Donaudy
Quando ti rivedrò (1879-1925)
- Sechs Lieder, Op. 75*..... Ludwig van Beethoven
Der Zufriedene (1770-1827)
- Sechs Lieder, Op. 48*..... Beethoven
Busslied
- Clair de lune* Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835-1921)
- Danse Macabre*..... Saint-Saëns

Intermission

- 114 Songs* Charles Ives
80. Weil' auf mir (1874-1954)
53. In the Alley
88. A Night Song
45. At the River
10. Charlie Rutlage
- The Last Five Years* Jason Robert Brown
Shiksa Goddess (b. 1970)

Texts and Translations

Si, tra i ceppi

*Si, tra i ceppi e le ritorte
La mia fe risplenderà.
Nò, nè pur la stessa morte
Il mio foco estinguerà.*

Per la gloria d'adorarvi

*Per la gloria d'adorarvi
Voglio amarvi, o luci care:
Amando penerò
Ma sempre v'amerò,
Sì, sì, nel mio penare:
Care, care.*

*Senza speme di diletto
Vano affetto e sospirare,
Ma i vostri dolci rai,
Chi vagheggiar può mai,
E non v'amare?*

Quando ti rivedrò

*Quando ti rivedrò,
infida amante che mi fosti sì cara?
Tante lagrime ho piante
or che altrui ci separa,
che temo sia fuggita ogni gioia
per sempre di mia vita.
Eppur più mi dispero,
più ritorno a sperare.
Più t'odio nel pensiero
e più ancora l'anima mia ti torna ad amar.*

*Quando ti rivedrò,
infida amante che mi fosti cara così?*

Der Zufriedene

*Zwar schuf das Glück bienieden
Mich weder reich noch groß,
Allein ich bin zufrieden,
Wie mit dem schönsten Loos.*

*So ganz nach meinem Herzen
Ward mir ein Freund vergönnt,
Denn Küssen, Trinken, Scherzen
Ist auch sein Element.*

*Mit ihm wird froh und weise
manch Fläschchen ausgeleert!
Denn auf der Lebensreise
ist Wein das beste Pferd.*

*Wenn mir bei diesem Lose
Nun auch ein trüb'res fällt,
So denk' ich: keine Rose
Blüht dornlos in der Welt.*

Yes, even in chains

Yes, even in chains and bonds
my faith will shine.
No, not even death itself
will extinguish my flame.

For the glory of adoring you

For the glory of adoring you
I want to love you, o dear eyes.
Loving you, I will suffer,
but always I will love you,
Yes, yes, in my suffering,
Dear, dear eyes.

Without hope of delight
vain affection it is to sigh,
but your sweet glances,
who could ever gaze upon
and not love you?

When shall I see you again

When shall I see you again,
unfaithful lover, who were so dear to me?
So many tears I have wept
now that another separates us,
that I fear that may be fled every joy
forever from my life.
And yet the more I despair,
the more I return to hoping.
The more I hate you in my mind,
the more my soul turns again to loving you.

When shall I see you again,
unfaithful lover, who were so dear to me?

Contentment

Admittedly, Luck has made me
neither rich nor great;
yet I alone am content,
as if I had the fairest lot.

A friend after my own heart
has been granted me;
for kissing, drinking and joking
is also his element.

With him, merrily and wisely,
are many bottles emptied!
For on life's journey,
wine is the best horse.

If this lot of mine
now sours and trouble falls,
then I will think: no rose
blooms thornless in the world.

Busslied

*An dir allein, an dir hab ich gesündigt,
Und übel oft vor dir gethan.
Du siebst die Schuld, die mir den Fluch verkündigt;
Sieh, Gott, auch meinen Jammer an.*

*Dir ist mein Flehn, mein Seufzen nicht verborgen,
Und meine Tränen sind vor dir.
Ach Gott, mein Gott, wie lange soll ich sorgen?
Wie lang entfernst du dich von mir?*

*Herr, handle nicht mit mir nach meinen Sünden,
Vergilt mir nicht nach meiner Schuld.
Ich suche dich, lass mich dein Antlitz finden,
Du Gott der Langmut und Geduld.*

*Früh wollst du mich mit deiner Gnade füllen,
Gott, Vater der Barmherzigkeit.
Erfreue mich um deines Namens willen,
Du bist ein Gott, der gern erfreut.*

*Lass deinen Weg mich wieder freudig wallen
Und lehre mich dein heilig Recht
Mich täglich thun nach deinem Wohlgefallen;
Du bist mein Gott, ich bin dein Knecht.*

*Herr, eile du, mein Schutz, mir beizustehen,
Und leite mich auf ebner Bahn.
Erbört mein Schrei'n, der Herr erbört mein Flehen
Und nimmt sich meiner Seele an.*

Clair de lune

*Dans la forêt que crée un rêve,
Je vais le soir dans la forêt;
Ta frêle image m'apparait
Et chemine avec moi sans trêve.*

*N'est-ce pas là ton voile fin,
Brouillard léger dans la nuit brune?
Ou n'est-ce que le clair de lune
A travers l'ombre du sapin?*

*Et ces larmes, sont ce les miennes
Que j'entends couler doucement?
Ou se peut-il réellement
Qu'à mes côtés en pleurs, tu viennes?*

Danse Macabre

*Zig et zig et zig, la mort en cadence,
Frappant une tombe avec son talon.
La mort à minuit joue un air de danse,
Zig et zig et zag, sur son violon.*

*Le vent d'hiver souffle, et la nuit est sombre;
Des gémissements sortent des tilleuls;
Les squelettes blancs vont à travers l'ombre,
Courant et sautant sous leurs grands linceuls.*

Song of Penitence

Against You alone have I sinned,
and have often done evil before You.
You see the guilt that deserves Your curse;
see also, God, my suffering.

From You I do not hide my prayers and sighs,
and my tears are before You.
Ah, God, my God, how long should I suffer?
How long will You leave me?

Lord, treat me not according to my sins,
Treat me not according to my guilt.
I seek for You; let me find Your face,
God of forbearance and patience.

May you fill me early with Your grace,
God, Father of Mercy.
Help me for Your name's sake,
You are my God, who gladly helps.

Let me once again happily walk your path
and teach me Your sacred law
so that I can mold myself daily to Your will;
You are my God, I am Your servant.

Lord, hurry to my aid, my Protector,
and lead me on the right path.
He hears my cries, the Lord hears my prayer
and takes my soul in charge.

Moonlight

In the dreamy wood I wander,
in the wood at eventide;
and thy slender, graceful figure
wanders ever by my side.

Is not this thy white veil floating?
Is not that thy gentle face?
Is it but the moonlight breaking
through the dark fir-branches space?

Can these tears so softly flowing
be my very own I hear?
Or indeed, art thou beside me,
weeping, darling, close anear?

Dance of Death

Zig and zig and zig, Death rhythmically
is knocking at a tomb with his heel.
Death at midnight plays a dance tune,
zig and zig and zag, on his violin.

The winter wind blows and the night is dark.
Sighs come forth from the linden trees;
the white skeletons pass in the shadows,
running and jumping under their large shrouds.

*Zig et zig et zig, chacun se trémousse.
On entend claquer les os des danseurs;
Un couple lascif s'assoit sur la mousse,
Comme pour goûter d'anciennes douceurs.*

*Zig et zig et zag, la mort continue
De racler sans fin son aigre instrument.
Un voile est tombé! La danseuse est nue,
Son danseur la serre amoureusement.*

*La dame est, dit-on, marquise ou baronne,
Et le vert galant un pauvre charron.
Horreur! et voilà qu'elle s'abandonne
Comme si le rustre était un baron.*

*Zig et zig et zig, quelle sarabande!
Quels cercles de morts se donnant la main!
Zig et zig et zag, on voit dans la bande
Le roi gambader auprès du villain.*

*Mais psit! tout à coup on quitte la ronde,
On se pousse, on fuit, le coq a chanté.
Oh, la belle nuit pour le pauvre monde . . .
Et vivent la mort et l'égalité!*

Weil' auf mir

*Weil' auf mir, du dunkles Auge,
übe deine ganze Macht,
ernste, milde, träumerische
unergründlich süsse Nacht.*

*Nimm mit deinem Zauber dunkel
diese Welt von binnen mir,
dass du über meinem Leben
einsam schwebest für und für.*

In the Alley

*On my way to work one summer day,
Just off the main highway,
Through a window in an alley smiled a lass,
Her name was Sally,
O could it be! She smiled on me!*

*All that day, before my eyes, amidst the busy whirl,
Came the image of that lovely Irish girl,
And hopes would seem to rise, as the clouds rise in the skies,
When I thought of her and those beaming eyes.*

*So that evening, dressed up smart and neat,
I wandered down her street,
At the corner of the alley was another man with Sally,
And my eyes grew dim, she smiles on him,
And only on him!*

*Zig and zig and zig, everyone is frisking about.
One hears the bones of the dancers rattling.
A lascivious couple sits down on the moss
as if to taste the old delights.*

*Zig and zig and zag, Death continues
to scrape endlessly on his shrill instrument.
A veil has fallen! The dancer is nude,
her partner clasps her amorously.*

*The lady, they say, is a marquise or a baroness,
and her dashing cavalier a poor wheelwright.
Horrors! and here she throws off all restraint
as if the boor were a baron.*

*Zig and zig and zig, what a sarabande!
What rounds of dead, holding hands!
Zig and zig and zag, one sees in the crowd
the king romping next to the villain.*

*But hush, suddenly they stop their dancing,
they push, they flee, the cock has crowed.
What a beautiful night for the poor world . . .
And long live death and equality!*

Linger on me

*Linger on me, dark eyes,
exert your entire power,
somber, mild, dream-like,
unfathomably sweet night.*

*With your magic darkness
take from me this world,
so that above my life
you alone will float forever and ever.*

A Night Song

*The young May moon is beaming, love,
The glowworm's lamp is gleaming,
How sweet to rove through Morna's grove,
When the drowsy world is dreaming, love!*

*Then awake! The heav'n's look bright, my dear,
'Tis ne'er too late for delight,
And best of all the ways to lengthen days
Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear
When the drowsy world is dreaming, love!*

At the River

*Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod,
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God?*

*Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful river,
Yes, we'll gather at the river
That flows by the throne of God.*

Charlie Rutlage

*Another good cowpuncher has gone to meet his fate,
I hope he'll find a resting place, within the golden gate.
Another place is vacant on the ranch of the XIT,
'Twill be hard to find another that's liked as well as he.
The first that died was Kid White, a man both tough and brave,
While Charlie Rutlage makes the third to be sent to his grave,
Caused by a cowhorse falling, while running after stock;
'Twas on the spring round up, a place where death men mock,
He went forward one morning on a circle through the hills,
He was gay and full of glee, and free from earthly ills;
But when it came to finish up the work on which he went,
Nothing came back from him; his time on earth was spent.
'Twas as he rode the round up, a XIT turned back to the herd;
Poor Charlie shoved him in again, his cutting horse he spurred;
Another turned; at that moment his horse the creature spied
And turned and fell with him, beneath poor Charlie died,
His relations in Texas his face never more will see,
But I hope he'll meet his loved ones beyond in eternity,
I hope he'll meet his parents, will meet them face to face,
And that they'll grasp him by the right hand at the shining throne of grace.*

Program Notes

George Frideric Handel: “Si, tra i ceppi”

Known primarily for his contributions to the opera repertory and for the establishment of the English oratorio, Handel composed works of every musical genre current in his time—but not everything he wrote was a triumph. The German-born Handel composed operas in London’s Covent Garden Theatre, completing *Berenice* in the opera season of 1737—the last of four seasons in which his operas competed with those at the King’s Theatre. However, adding to the pressures of the ongoing rivalry, Handel’s health declined suddenly, temporarily paralyzing his right hand. When coupled with Handel’s shifting compositional focus to oratorio, these factors have been blamed for the relative failure of *Berenice*, a piece performed merely three times after its premiere. Despite the opera’s lack of success, however, it contains individual numbers of merit.

One of those admirable numbers is “Si, tra i ceppi.” This aria comes in the second of three acts and is sung by Demetrio, the object of Berenice’s affection. Demetrio, alas, prefers Berenice’s sister Selene—so Berenice (queen of Egypt) orders him imprisoned and tortured, and his response is this defiant aria in ternary form (ABA). Demetrio’s confidence in his love and staunch disregard for his punishment come to fruition within the aria, primarily through text repetition, text expression, and tonalities that complement the text. The first and third sections (A and A’) are set in a major key. In these sections, Demetrio sings optimistically and with conviction about his ever-lasting faith. In the B section, Handel changes to the minor mode. Still exuding confidence, the text of this central B section takes on a new, darker mood with the mention of death (“Not even death itself could extinguish my flame”).

To enliven the repetition of the text, Handel embellishes it by inserting melismatic passages—strings of many notes sung on the same syllable—into the music. These melismas create a form of text expression, since the long passages support ideas of endurance. Similarly, as in most Baroque arias, performance of “Si, tra i ceppi” calls for artistic interpretation, as heard in dynamic variations throughout and added ornamentations in the repetition of the A section.

Giovanni Bononcini: “Per la gloria d’adorarvi”

Berlin: home to Prussian royalty, the Berlin Wall—and popular Italian opera? Yes, Berlin, too, had its place in the early 1700s as an Italian opera “hot spot.” In fact, it was here where Handel and Italian composer Giovanni Bononcini first met—a meeting said to have influenced Handel’s predilection for opera. Bononcini began as an opera composer in Rome, where he worked from 1692-1696. In late 1719 or early 1720, Bononcini agreed to join the Royal Academy of Music—an organization intended to establish Italian opera in London—as composer and cellist. Once in London, Bononcini found himself working alongside none other than George Frideric Handel, Master of the Orchestra. In 1722, Bononcini’s opera *Griselda* was completed, and premiered in February of that year.

Set in Palermo, Sicily, *Griselda* tells of King Gualtiero’s schemes to test the virtue of his peasant-wife Griselda. In one such scheme, the King proposes to

take another wife, Almirena, who is in love with Ernesto. At the thought of losing Almirena to the King, Ernesto sings “Per la gloria d’adorarvi.” Strophic in form (meaning that the melody repeats throughout, but with varying text), this Baroque aria again requires that the performer embellish the music, as in “Si, tra i ceppi.”

Overall, this aria is much simpler than Handel’s “Si, tra i ceppi,” though the arias are related in their themes. The melody predominates throughout, which is indicative of Bononcini’s “plaintive tunefulness,” as described by professor Lowell Lindgren. Such emphasis on the vocal melody is characteristic of 18th- and early 19th-century Italian *bel canto* (“beautiful singing”), as demonstrated by the light, agile tone production demanded at the conclusion of each of the aria’s two major sections. The sheer melodic simplicity and beauty make Bononcini’s aria attractive to this day.

Stefano Donaudy: “Quando ti rivedrò

Though far from prolific, Italian composer Stefano Donaudy belongs among those whose works focus on Romantic expressivity. Originally from Palermo, Donaudy authored only five operas during his career, writing primarily for the piano. By the turn of the twentieth century, trends in composition were changing drastically; while some created new styles altogether, others simply altered preexisting ones. Donaudy’s *36 Arie di Stilo Antico* (“Arias of Ancient Style”), published between 1918-1922, represents the latter—a new “take” on old styles.

From this collection, the aria “Quando ti rivedrò” uses music as a tool to convey emotion. Drastic dynamic contrasts and pitches outside the key combine to support and articulate the intensifying heartache. Donaudy alternates between three and four beats in a bar as a byproduct of unnatural phrasing and irregular text declamation. The text setting is obscured by multiple syllables assigned to one rhythmic value. Such irregularities and the aria’s through-composition—avoidance of melodic repetition—are proof that Donaudy has strayed from formulaic convention in his attempt to express every nuance of the text. In addition to the intricate design of the music itself, Donaudy also provides the performer with uncommon yet explicit stylistic indications, such as *tornando* (“returning to passion”) and *doloroso* (“pathetic grief”). Finally, as in “Per la gloria d’adorarvi,” Donaudy’s aria also boasts a *bel canto* melody, but with contemporary twists, suitable to the evolving compositional methods of the early twentieth century.

Ludwig van Beethoven: “Der Zufriedene” and “Busslied”

Originally from Bonn, Germany, Beethoven began traveling at age thirteen, visiting Vienna and London, and returning often to his home in Germany. In 1796, he set out on his first tour, and within a short number of years had established himself as a sought-after composer, with publishers vying for his newest works. At this time, however, early indications of hearing loss were beginning to trouble the composer. In 1801, he finally acknowledged his worsening condition. A year later, Beethoven spent the summer in Heiligenstadt just outside of Vienna, where he (unsuccessfully) sought a cure in the serenity of the countryside. Before returning to Vienna in October, Beethoven crafted what is known as the Heiligenstadt Testament—a secret document addressed to his brothers, in which he expressed

his despair, but also his refusal to yield to that despair. Not long before this declaration, Beethoven completed his opus 48, settings of six sacred poems that supported his personal religious beliefs.

The sixth Lied in the set, “Busslied” (meaning “penitence”), reflects Beethoven’s pious resignation and directly represents, through its bipartite form (AB), his conflicted state of mind as a result of his worsening condition. The first section, in minor mode, is a direct cry for redemption and divine intervention. Through the minor tonality, frequent harmonic dissonances, and uneven phrasing, Beethoven depicts the helplessness and sorrow he was experiencing as a result of his increasing deafness. Similarly, text expression and word painting—a technique in which the accompaniment directly reflects the text—are used strategically, as in the jagged leap on the word “*Jammer*” (“sorrow”). The B section shifts to the major mode, with a highly embellished accompaniment. These aspects of the second half of the Lied represent the other side to Beethoven’s inconsistent mindset, conveying optimism, praise of God, and hope for forgiveness.

The years that followed Beethoven’s time at Heiligenstadt saw the completion of many works, including some of his greatest. In 1809 came another set of six Lieder, opus 75; the final song was “*Der Zufriedene*.” Unlike the conflicting temperaments contained in “Busslied,” “*Der Zufriedene*” exudes contentment and simplicity. It is a straightforward strophic form, set in a major key with no dissonance. The playfulness of the text is reflected in the *vivace* (“lively”) tempo indication, and in the sixteenth-note triplets and *staccato* (“detached”) eighth-note figures in the accompaniment. This short, lighthearted piece—though not riddled with the same inner turmoil as in “Busslied”—represents another aspect of the broad scope of Beethoven’s multi-faceted Lieder repertoire.

Camille Saint-Saëns: “Clair de lune” and “Danse Macabre”

Like Handel, Camille Saint-Saëns composed for every musical genre of his time, even while promoting the music of other composers, including that of Wagner, Schumann, and Liszt. From them, Saint-Saëns drew inspiration, including Romantic elements such as word painting and text expression, as demonstrated previously in “*Si, tra i ceppi*” and “Busslied.” Saint-Saëns’s songs “*Clair de lune*” and “*Danse Macabre*,” though otherwise unrelated, share a common thread in their prominent uses of these techniques.

Music of the Romantic era often expresses an intimate relationship with nature. “*Clair de lune*” (1865) is one of three songs written by Saint-Saëns between 1855-65 that invokes the moonlight. Like the journey embarked on in the poetry, the song is through-composed—that is, void of melodic repetition. This parallel is one form of text expression. Additionally, tranquility is conveyed through dreamlike ascending lines and chords that seem to twinkle within the piano part. The melody also rises and falls in a natural manner as if to symbolize the night breeze.

Whereas “*Clair de lune*” depicts bittersweet serenity, Saint-Saëns’s “*Danse Macabre*” contrasts drastically, illustrating the dance of Death. First composed as a song in 1872, Saint-Saëns later chose to expand the work into a symphonic poem—an orchestral genre invented by Liszt, but largely popularized by Saint-

Saëns. The song develops in a modified sonata-rondo form, meaning that key melodic material repeats with episodes of different qualities alternating throughout. Additionally, the work transitions midway from minor mode to major, and then back again. The scene of this supernatural frenzy is set by the piano introduction with a string of jarring musical leaps called tritones. Commonly known as the devil's interval, these tritones foreshadow the dark activities about to ensue. The first poetic phrase (“Zig et zig et zig”), repeated throughout, is a literary translation of the sound of Death's violin. The first repetition of the A section (the main melody) accompanies a return to this image of Death scraping away on his shrill instrument. Finally, the tempo indication is “*Mouvement de Valse*” (“Waltz Movement”), and the song is written in 3/4 time—typical of many dances, and thus appropriate for characterizing the dance of Death.

Charles Ives: *114 Songs*

Charles Ives is considered to be the foremost American art-song composer, credited with establishing a twentieth-century trend in musical experimentation. Throughout his life, Ives drew inspiration primarily from those around him. His father encouraged experimentation, his professor at Yale guided him toward non-English art songs, and his wife advocated music as a means for capturing specific individual emotions and experiences. The First World War also motivated Ives to spend the years between 1919-1921 completing unfinished and partial drafts. He compiled the majority of his songs into a privately published collection entitled *114 Songs*, from which the five songs on this program are taken.

At Yale, under Horatio Parker, Ives had begun to compose German Lieder (songs). The Lied “Weil' auf mir,” written in 1902, appears in a set of four German songs within *114 Songs*. All elements of this work reflect the “magic darkness” of the night referenced in its text. In the left hand of the accompaniment, Ives writes an unbroken stream of sixteenth notes, establishing a dreamlike aura. He also uses a key area with darker-sounding qualities to portray the night. Likewise, the song's repetition, shaped by its strophic form, portrays the unchanged stillness of the night. Finally, as it is an Ives piece, experimentation is evident in the irregular phrasing; most phrases in the piece comprise four measures, but the second phrase in each strophe (section) is only three measures long.

While in college, some of Ives's works were influenced by his social life. In 1896, he crafted “In the Alley” as a musical parody for his own amusement and that of his friends, including George Felsburg—the regular pianist at a local theatre frequented by Ives's circle. In this song, Ives satirizes popular compositional and performance trends of the time, primarily through exaggeration. For example, the piece exhibits a painfully simple melody and a straightforward ternary (ABA') form. Additionally, Ives marks *più tenuto* (“more held”) before the conclusion of each A section for melodramatic effect.

“A Night Song” was written one year before “In the Alley,” and shares several features with it as well as with “Weil' auf mir.” All three contain a common theme of sentimentality, heard this time in lyrics about dreaming of love. Similar to “In the Alley,” this ballad is in ternary form; the structure is defined by different key areas, again including darker-sounding ones during the A sections to depict

nighttime. Also similar to “Weil’ auf mir,” “A Night Song” uses unexpected phrasing, avoiding any sense of arrival or resolution prior to each section’s close.

From 1908-18, Ives’s output included significant use of recognizable American melodies. In 1916, he composed his *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, in which he used the popular hymn tune, “Shall We Gather At the River?” In the same year, he extracted this excerpt from the sonata and adapted it for voice and piano. Ives’s version of the tune uses an atonal accompaniment that feels unstable to most ears. The otherwise traditional melody is slightly altered by interpolations of repeated material following the conclusions of each section, creating a feeling of circular motion and a compromised sense of finality.

The last song in this set is one of Ives’s most well known. Like “In the Alley” and “A Night Song,” “Charlie Rutlage” is composed in ternary form. As in the other two, “Charlie Rutlage” begins and ends in a clearly defined key area, when the vocalist calmly eulogizes Charlie’s unfortunate death. In the atonal B section, however, the text turns to a dramatic narrative of Charlie’s demise, intensifying throughout as the accompaniment moves further away from tonality. The performance grows louder, faster, and more exciting as it builds to its climax, where all action—and Charlie—comes to a crashing halt, literally! Composed around 1920-21, this clever work mimics the style of the so-called Western folk song in its use of text declamation and in the famous “boom-chick” guitar pattern played on the piano.

Jason Robert Brown: “Shiksa Goddess”

Musical theater composer Jason Robert Brown has a knack for weaving his Jewish heritage into his writing. Brown grew up north of New York City and studied composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester. With five musicals to his name since 1995, he includes Jewish characters or undertones in each; *Parade* is about a Jewish factory owner, *13* features a soon-to-be bar mitzvah named Evan, and *The Last Five Years* presents a struggling relationship between Cathy (an actress) and Jamie (a Jewish writer). *The Last Five Years* (2001) is Brown’s most acclaimed musical to date. Unconventional in structure, the drama chronicles the rise and fall of the couple’s romantic partnership, with Cathy telling her side of their story from end to beginning, and Jamie from beginning to end. The two sing together only once—at their wedding, mid-show.

“Shiksa Goddess” marks Jamie’s first appearance in the musical. The song’s function within the context of the story is twofold: as a narrative in which Jamie obsesses over falling in love with a “shiksa” (a gentile woman), and as comedic contrast to Cathy’s preceding heavy-hearted song about the end of their relationship. These aspects are reflected in the loose rondo form of the piece, as it alternates between narrative verses and comical choruses. In this satirical work, Brown bases all elements of the song on the notion of non-Judaism. For example, the recurring pattern heard in the accompaniment at the start of the song is a Latin rhythm—far from what one might expect in a Jew-sung, Jew-composed work. Additionally, each repetition of the refrain is marked “Rock ‘n’ Roll feel”—a musical style frequently associated with rebelling against the status quo. As in many of Jason Robert Brown’s songs, “Shiksa Goddess” is entertainingly witty, fusing comedy with absurdity and repetition with innovation.

Acknowledgments

To my audience: The point of today is not solely to fulfill the requirements of a senior project, but to share with you a collection of beautiful melodies—melodies worth sharing. Thank you for being present to experience this with me; I am grateful.

To the music faculty, staff, and students: Last month, I sat during Dr. Spiller's piano recital and marveled at how incredibly fortunate I am to have spent the last four and a half years learning with and from so many wonderful, kind, intelligent, talented individuals. Though from year to year the faces change, we are a family and this is our home, and I will always cherish that I got to be a part of it.

To Jackie: Well, you did it. You transformed yet another bright-eyed hopeful into a true singer. You've helped me hone this craft and open doors I never thought possible, and along the way I've made an incredible friend. Thank you for being a confidante and mentor, and for guiding my voice over the past four years.

To my parents: Two-man shows at Poppa's house; *The Polar Express*; the clarinet; Ambrose Kemper; a bar-mitzvah; CMEA; Pappy Yokum; play-a-thons; Doody; London New Years Day Parade; talent show house band; Hysterium; half-time shows; college auditions; symphony; Europe Tour; student recitals; Take It SLO; choirs; conducting; junior recital; opera workshop; a singing, dancing Nazi; professional debut; now this ... you've supported me through it all. Thank you, I love you.

To Onge: This is a love that came at an unexpected time for us both, but it has been my motivation, my comfort, and my backbone since day one. Thank you for bringing so much joy into my life, I love you.

To my Poppa: Everything that I do and have ever done on stage has been in your memory and your honor. I love you. I know you'd be proud.